

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method comprising:
 - 5 storing a plurality of duplicate messages on a mail server, wherein each of the plurality includes a copy of an attachment;
 - 10 storing a copy of each of the plurality of duplicate messages and one or more copies of the attachment to a backup medium, wherein the number of copies of the attachment stored on the backup medium is less than the number of duplicate messages stored on the backup medium.
 2. The method of claim 1 wherein only a single copy of the attachment is stored on the backup medium.
- 15 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said storing a copy of each of the plurality of duplicate messages and one or more copies of the attachment further comprises:
 - extracting metadata from each of the plurality of messages;
 - storing the metadata in an attachment index;
 - 20 storing the metadata with each message copy on the backup medium;
 - storing the metadata with the one or more copies of the attachment on the backup medium.
- 25 4. The method of claim 3 wherein storing the one or more copies of the attachment comprises storing the attachment under a file name, wherein the file name is based on the metadata.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein the metadata comprises a mail folder ID.
6. The method of claim 3 wherein the metadata comprises a message time.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein the metadata comprises a record number.

8. The method of claim 3 wherein the metadata comprises a mail recipient.

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9. The method of claim 3 further comprising restoring the plurality of messages to the mail server, wherein restoring the plurality of messages comprises:

copying each of the plurality of duplicate messages on the backup medium to the mail server;

10 storing the metadata stored with each of the message copies in an attachment index;

attaching a copy of the attachment on the backup medium to each message copy in the mail server according to the metadata in the attachment index.

15 10. A system comprising:

a mail server operable to store a plurality of duplicate messages, wherein each of the plurality includes a copy of an attachment;

a backup application, wherein the backup application is operable to store a copy of each of the plurality of duplicate messages and one or more copies of the attachment to a backup medium, wherein the number of copies of the attachment stored on the backup medium is less than the number of duplicate messages stored on the backup medium.

20 11. The system of claim 10 wherein only a single copy of the attachment is stored on the backup medium.

25 12. The system of claim 10 wherein said backup application is operable to store said copy of each of the plurality of duplicate messages and one or more copies of the attachment by:

extracting metadata from each of the plurality of messages;

storing the metadata in an attachment index;
storing the metadata with each message copy on the backup medium;
storing the metadata with the one or more copies of the attachment on the backup medium.

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13. The system of claim 12 wherein the backup application is operable to store the one or more copies of the attachment by storing the attachment under a file name, wherein the file name is based on the metadata.

10 14. The system of claim 12 wherein the metadata comprises a mail folder ID.

15. The system of claim 12 wherein the metadata comprises a message time.

16. The system of claim 12 wherein the metadata comprises a record number.

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17. The system of claim 12 wherein the metadata comprises a mail recipient.

18. The system of claim 12 wherein the backup application is operable to restore the plurality of messages to the mail server, wherein restoring the plurality of messages comprises:

copying each of the plurality of duplicate messages on the backup medium to the mail server;

storing the metadata stored with each of the message copies in an attachment index;

25 attaching a copy of the attachment on the backup medium to each message copy in the mail server according to the metadata in the attachment index.

19. A computer readable medium including program instructions executable to implement a method comprising:

storing a plurality of duplicate messages on a mail server, wherein each of the plurality includes a copy of an attachment;

storing a copy of each of the plurality of duplicate messages and one or more copies of the attachment to a backup medium, wherein the number of copies of the attachment stored on the backup medium is less than the number of duplicate messages stored on the backup medium.

20. The computer readable medium of claim 19 wherein only a single copy of the attachment is stored on the backup medium.

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21. The computer readable medium of claim 19 wherein said storing a copy of each of the plurality of duplicate messages and one or more copies of the attachment further comprises:

extracting metadata from each of the plurality of messages;

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storing the metadata in an attachment index;

storing the metadata with each message copy on the backup medium;

storing the metadata with the one or more copies of the attachment on the backup medium.

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22. The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein storing the one or more copies of the attachment comprises storing the attachment under a file name, wherein the file name is based on the metadata.

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23. The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the metadata comprises a mail folder ID.

24. The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the metadata comprises a message time.

25. The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the metadata comprises a record number.
26. The computer readable medium of claim 21 wherein the metadata comprises a mail recipient.
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27. The computer readable medium of claim 21 further comprising restoring the plurality of messages to the mail server, wherein restoring the plurality of messages comprises:
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 - copying each of the plurality of duplicate messages on the backup medium to the mail server;
 - storing the metadata stored with each of the message copies in an attachment index;
 - attaching a copy of the attachment on the backup medium to each message copy in
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 - the mail server according to the metadata in the attachment index.